

R 131100Z NOV 08  
FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4652

UNCLAS HELSINKI 000517

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EWWT](#) [EAID](#) [ECIN](#) [ECON](#) [EFIS](#) [MARR](#) [MASS](#) [MCAP](#) [MOPS](#)

PHSA, PINS, PREL, SMIG, SENV, SNAR, ASEC, XX, FI

SUBJECT: FINLAND'S PARTICIPATION IN GLOBAL MARITIME PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES

REF: STATE 50488

**¶1.** SUMMARY: Embassy Helsinki's Global Maritime Partnership (GMP) (composed of DAO, POL, RSO and chaired by ECON) has concluded that Finland is already engaged in a number of voluntary multinational initiatives that fall under the broad GMP umbrella. Current GOF collaborations range from sea surveillance to pollution abatement to border security - all of which could form the basis for additional US-Finnish cooperation in the GMP context. END SUMMARY

**¶2.** The following actions are already underway between Finland and the US or between Finland and neighboring states and international partners:

#### MULTINATIONAL MILITARY MARITIME COOPERATION

**¶A.** Commander of the Finnish Navy, VADM Hans Holmstrom, was briefed by the US Chief of Naval Operations on the concept of Global Maritime Partnerships at the US Naval War College in Spring 2007.

**¶B.** Command, US Naval Forces Europe has invited the Commander of the Finnish Navy, VADM Hans Holmstrom, to participate in the Initial (IPC), Mid-Term (MPC) and Final Planning Conferences (FPC) for the US-GMP initiative off the west coast of Africa in the Gulf of Guinea known as "African Partnership Station" (APS). The Finns declined to participate in the IPC or MPC but will send a representative to the FPC in November in Stuttgart, Germany.

**¶C.** There have been at least two exchange visits between Finnish Naval leadership and the Office of the Secretary of Defense regarding Maritime Domain/Situational Awareness (MDA/MSA). Finland is considered a "model" to emulate when it comes to MDA/MSA and, as part of the US National Strategy for Maritime Security (NSMS), OSD reached out to Finland to assess Finland's strengths and weaknesses in executing MDA/MSA. The Finnish Navy, Border Guard, and their Maritime Administration collaborate to collate one combine maritime "picture" for total Baltic maritime situational awareness. The lessons learned during the exchange visits are still being assessed by OSD and the US Navy and Coast Guard.

**¶E.** The Finnish Navy works closely with the Swedish Navy in a maritime situational awareness effort known as SUCFIS - Sea Surveillance Cooperation, Finland and Sweden. Both nations benefit from this effort.

**¶F.** A recent study completed by Finland, Norway and Sweden indicated a number of areas where the interests of all three nations might benefit from combining resources, standard operating procedures, etc. That study is known as NORDSUP. The cooperative engagement between the three nations includes a number of maritime initiatives, all of which would fall under the US concept of GMP. Implementation of many of the maritime-related NORDSUP initiatives will likely begin in **¶2009**.

**¶G.** Finland's military forces, including naval personnel, regularly deploy to international peacekeeping operations around the world. However, no Finnish naval or Coast Guard vessels have been sent abroad to support international peacekeeping or crisis operations. Their Navy is not really configured for such operations; they are a coastal/ Green

Water Navy and their vessels would be challenged to deploy beyond the Baltic. However, Finnish Navy leadership is assessing possible venues and operations in which Finnish Navy vessels might actually be deployed. The key determinant for future Finnish Navy deployments will be the Finnish political will to do so, and an agreement to fund such an operation.

**IH.** Finland is building two vessels designed specifically to address potential oil spills at sea. These vessels will be commissioned and become part of the active force for the Finnish Coast Guard within the next few years.

**II.** In 2006, ADM Collins, Commandant of the US Coast Guard, visited Finland and met with VADM Jakko Smolander, Commander of the Finnish Border Guard. ADM Collins has since retired and VADM Smolander retires in December 2008. However, VADM Smolander's deputy, MG Kaukanen, and the new US Coast Guard Commandant, ADM Allen have been in communication via their respective staffs and USDAO Helsinki to reinvigorate the pursuit of a number of previously agreed-upon cooperative initiatives.

#### MULTINATIONAL ECONOMIC/POLITICAL MARITIME COOPERATION

**IA.** Finland is a member of the Helsinki Commission, known as HELCOM, which works to protect the marine environment of the Baltic Sea from all sources of pollution through intergovernmental cooperation. HELCOM's Baltic Sea Action Plan aims to reduce pollution in the Baltic Sea by 2020. The Plan has been heralded as a pilot project for other European seas in context of the proposed EU Marine Strategy Directive. Additionally, HELCOM provides for a multi-national response in case of major maritime incidents in the Baltic. Members include Denmark, Estonia, the European Community, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Sweden.

**IB.** Finland participates in a multinational organization called Northern Dimension, which seeks to enhance cooperation among its members on issues ranging from economic cooperation to nuclear safety and the protection of the environment and natural resources. Under the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership, Finland participated in 2005 in the upgrade of the Southwest Water Treatment Plant in St. Petersburg, Russia. The improved plant now treats 85% of wastewater flowing into the Baltic Sea. Additionally, Finland via Northern Dimension activities assisted with the modernization of Russian nuclear power plants on the Kola Peninsula and in the Leningrad region. Northern Dimension members include Iceland, Russia, Norway and the EU with the United States and Canada maintaining observer status.

**IC.** In 2004 Russia, Estonia and Finland implemented a joint mandatory ship reporting system known as Gulf of Finland Reporting (GOFREP). GOFREP divides the Gulf into three zones managed by the three partner nations: Southern Sector (Estonia), Northern Sector (Finland), Eastern Sector (Russia). All ships over 300GT must identify to GOFREP their location and cargo before entering a particular sector. The sector's administrating country then relays this information to a tri-laterally operated database. As Russia develops its Baltic Sea ports, traffic in the region has increased, and so too has the potential for accidents. GOFREP's implementation has led to an 80% reduction in collisions in the area.

**ID.** According to the GOF, GOFREP will eventually be expanded to cover the entire Baltic Sea, transforming the system from traffic surveillance to sophisticated traffic control for the Baltic. Finland and Sweden currently share much of their maritime traffic information via Maritime Traffic Imaging - which provides valuable information for safety, security and defense cooperation. There is interest in expanding such information-sharing to neighboring Baltic Sea countries.

**IE.** The GOF is actively in the Development of an EU Baltic Strategy. Sweden will propose the new strategy in the latter half of 2009, during their EU presidency. Key subject areas include: environmental protection of the Baltic, safe sea

traffic, efficient logistics and transport connections, energy cooperation and internal security. Overall, the Strategy supports the continued use of existing organizations such as HELCOM and the Northern Dimension, and the inclusion of non-EU states in any initiatives.

¶3. COMMENT: Embassy Helsinki's GMP Working Group has concluded that the GOF has already been briefed on the GMP concept, and currently participates in a wide variety of GMP-type initiatives. The GOF actively seeks additional partnerships in the GMP context that would improve the safety and environmental health of the Baltic Sea and beyond. Great opportunity exists for the US to capitalize on Finland's involvement and initiative, for example, through sharing and exporting of 'best practices'. For further information on military maritime cooperation efforts, contact CDR Jon Olson in DAO at 358-9-6162-5331, olsonjr@state.gov. For further information on economic maritime cooperation efforts, contact EconOff Wendy Kahler at 358-9-6162-5481, kahlerwa@state.gov.END COMMENT.

BARRETT